



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Governor Charles D. Baker
Lt. Governor Karyn E. Polito
Secretary Matthew A. Beaton

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Governor Baker Declares March “Massachusetts Maple Month”

BOSTON - March 1, 2016 – Governor Charlie Baker has declared March “Massachusetts Maple Month” in an effort to support the Commonwealth’s many maple producers and encourage Massachusetts residents to purchase locally-produced maple products.

“Creating maple syrup is a time-honored Massachusetts tradition that the more than 300 maple syrup producers in the Commonwealth keep alive,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “I encourage residents to support our local maple syrup producers and purchase delicious Massachusetts maple products.”

“The income of our dairy farms is supplemented by the production of maple syrup, making it not only the first agricultural crop of the season but also one of the most important,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. “By declaring March as Massachusetts Maple month, we hope everyone will take part in recognizing the importance of the Commonwealth’s maple producers.”

“Maple syrup is an inherently sustainable agricultural product because healthy, well-maintained trees can be tapped for over 100 years,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Matthew Beaton**. “The Baker-Polito Administration is proud to recognize and support the maple syrup producers that help protect our environment and contribute to the Commonwealth’s vibrant agricultural and tourism industries.”

Massachusetts is home to approximately 300 maple syrup producers, including many who are open to the public throughout the sugaring season. Last year approximately 75,000 gallons of maple syrup worth more than \$4.3 million was produced across the Commonwealth, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service. Approximately \$1.9 million in revenue is generated by maple farms, restaurants, bed and breakfasts, country inns, and other attractions in farm communities. Additionally, Massachusetts sugar makers steward more than 15,000 acres of woodland.

“Maple syrup is a delicious and versatile natural sweetener, compliments of Mother Nature and the state's maple producers,” **said Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) Commissioner Lebeaux**. “Maple syrup is the first farm product of the season and the oldest agricultural enterprise in the country, and its production helps contribute to the diversity of our agricultural products.”

To kick off the Massachusetts maple season, DAR Commissioner John Lebeaux will join local and agricultural officials on Friday, March 4, 2016 at Stonegate Farms in Conway at 10:00am for a ceremonial sugar maple tree tapping.

“This event signifies the start of maple season in Massachusetts and celebrates the hard work, dedication and tradition of sugar makers across the Commonwealth,” **said State Representative Stephen Kulik (D-Worthington)**. “I am proud that this event is once again being held in my district at Stonegate Farm in Conway, a town with a rich history in agriculture and maple sugaring. I hope this season is one of the sweetest and most productive yet!”

“We’ve already had a good run of sap with the early mild weather in February,” **said Dana Goodfield, owner of Stonegate Farm in Conway.** “The sap is excellent, yielding syrup that has a wonderful color and great flavor.”

While March has earned the distinction of Maple Month, tapping in Massachusetts can start at the end of January and continue through April. For prime sugaring, nights must be below freezing and days must be above freezing. Everything from the weather, soil, and genetics of the tree can affect maple syrup flavor - like wine, flavor can differ from region to region.

The [Massachusetts Maple Producers Association \(MMPA\)](#) will hold its 3rd Annual Maple Weekend March 19 to 20. Maple Weekend will feature open house events at over 45 sugarhouses, and special maple menus at participating restaurants made with 100% pure Massachusetts maple syrup.

Go to the MassGrown [website](#) and click on [maple](#) for a complete listing of maple sugar houses or www.massmaple.org.

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DAR’s mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, and Crop and Pest Services – DAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth’s agricultural community to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture’s role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit DAR’s website at www.mass.gov/agr, and/or follow at twitter.com/mdarcommish.

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